Hebrew

Qal and Khbēdīm

KJT Johnstone Tyabandha, Ph.D.

Regular verbs are based on a triliteral root, a group of three letters containing the root idea, for example ⟨(sh)(m)(r)⟩ ‘keeping’, ⟨(m)(sh)(l)⟩ ‘ruling’. Conjugation is done through modifications involving vowels and pronominal particles. These latter come as prefix or suffix. Thus from the root ⟨(sh)(m)(r)⟩ we have [pf.3.m.sg] *shāmar* ‘he hath kept’, [imperat.2.m.sg] *shmōr* ‘keep thou’, [pf.2.m.sg] *shāmarthā* ‘thou hast kept’, and [impf.2.m.sg] *tishmōr* ‘thou wilt keep’.

The simplest of the conjugation is called *qal*, which means ‘light’. From this is derived all the rest, which are called *khbēdīm*, that is ‘heavy’. The paradigm is normally given as a conjugation of one word, namely *phācal*, ‘he did’ or ‘he performed’. Beginning from qal then this becomes, *phācal*, *nipcal*, *phicēl*, *phucal*, *hipcīl*, *hopcal* and *hitphacēl*. Descriptively these are respectively simple active, simple passive, intensive active, intensive passive, causative active, causative passive and reflexive.

As an example consider the qal or phācal [pf.3.m.sg] *shābar*, ‘he hath broken’. The nipcal is [pf.pass.3.m.sg] *nishbhar*, ‘he was broken’. The phicēl is [pf.intens.3.m.sg] *shibhēr*, ‘he hath utterly $\left\{\begin{array}{c}\text{broken}\\\text{smashed}\end{array}\right\}$’. And the phucal is [pf.intens.pass.3.m.sg] *shubhar*, ‘he was utterly broken’. For the rest of the khbēdīm the qal *ghādal*, ‘he was great’ gives the hipcīl is [pf.caus.act.3.m.sg] *higdhīl*, ‘he hath $\left\{\begin{array}{c}\text{made great}\\\text{magnified}\end{array}\right\}$’. The hopcal is [pf.caus.pass.3.m.sg] *hogdhal*, ‘he was $\left\{\begin{array}{c}\text{made great}\\\text{magnified}\end{array}\right\}$’. And the hitphacēl is [pf.reflx.3.m.sg] *hitghaddēl*, ‘he hath $\left\{\begin{array}{c}\text{made himself great}\\\text{magnified himself}\end{array}\right\}$’.

Words like *khaḣȧsher*, ‘as’, ‘when’, are used with the perfect tense, whereas those like *khī*, ‘that’, ‘when’, are used with the imperfect.

Bibliography

Kit Tyabandha, *Notes*, 5 May – 31 August 2008, unpublished

 Alba, 12th November, 2014